

TOWN OF LANESBOROUGH SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Submitted by Diane Stevens, Town Secretary
December 21, 2015

Present: Mr. John Goerlach, Chair
Mr. Robert Ericson
Mr. Henry Sayers
Mr. Paul Sieloff, Town Administrator

Warrants: Warrant Signed

The meeting was opened by John Goerlach at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment

John Goerlach asked for a moment of silence for Thomas Cazavelan. Superintendent Doug Diaz came before the Board to share some information that was discussed at a Lanesborough School Committee meeting relating to school options. Mr. Diaz presented the Board with information for their review.[#1]

Rich Cohen came before the Board with concerns regarding the proposed Mount Greylock School survey. Mr. Cohen believed that a survey is not a good vehicle for making this type of decision and stated that it should be decided at a Town Meeting or with a ballot. Mr. Cohen further stated that he believed the survey is unfair and one sided and doesn't make for open discussion. Mr. Cohen gave the Board a summary of why it he believed it does not make sense to send the Town's students to Hoosac Valley schools as it is not as highly academically rated and he believes it will also reduce residents' property values. Robert Barton came before the Board and spoke about the survey as well. Mr. Barton hoped that the survey would do more than assess the School District and stated that he would like both the Town of Lanesborough and the Town of Williamston to look again at amending the Regional Agreement at the Special Town Meeting.

Permit(s) / Contract(s) / Use of Town Property or Notification to Town of Community Event / Appointment(s)

Road Opening Permit – Berkshire Gas – 220 Narragansett Avenue

Mr. Sieloff presented the Board with a Road Opening permit from Berkshire Gas Company for property located at 220 Narragansett Avenue. Motion 15-198. Motion made by Robert Ericson to approve the Road Opening Permit of Berkshire Gas Company for 220 Narragansett Avenue subject to the Memorandum from DPW Director Decelles dated December 17, 2015, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 3-0. [#2]

Appoint Eleanor Goerlach – Library Employee

Mr. Sieloff offered Ms. Goerlach as a new employee who will be working in the Library. Motion 15-199. Motion made by Robert Ericson to appoint Eleanor Goerlach as a member of the library staff, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 2-0. John Goerlach abstained from vote.

2016 Selectmen License Approvals

Mr. Sieloff presented the Board with the remaining licenses to be approved for 2016. The first license is for Corcorn Food Management, LLC. Mr. Sieloff explained that the Town is still waiting for proof of worker's compensation insurance from the company before the Common Victualler's license will be released. Motion 15-200. Motion made by Robert Ericson to approve the Common Victualler's license of Corcorn Food Management LLC subject to proof of worker's compensation insurance, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 3-0. The second license is for a Motor Vehicle Class III Junk License for Sayer's Auto Wrecking, Inc. This license could not be renewed at the prior meeting due to the absence of the Chair. Motion 15-201. Motion made by Robert Ericson to approve the Class III Motor Vehicle Junk License of Sayer's Auto Wrecking, Inc., seconded by John Goerlach. Motion carried 2-0. Henry Sayers abstained from vote. The third license is for a Common Victualler's license for Mad Jacks BBQ. Mr. Sieloff informed the Board that several attempts have been made, one of which was a hand carried letter from the Police Chief to the establishment and no attempt has been made by the business to contact the Town to renew this license. The Board agreed to wait to see if the establishment remains open after the first of the year. [#3]

Donald Dermyer – Mount Greylock School Questions and Concerns

Donald Dermyer came before the Board to discuss a school survey. Mr. Dermyer suggested expanding the survey to ask more questions of Town residents. Mr. Dermyer stated that he was a director of marketing for a Fortune 500 company and has experience with surveys. Mr. Dermyer gave suggested questions for the Board's consideration and would like to open the survey to include more than choices than the Adams/Cheshire District. Mr. Dermyer stated that he would also like the Board to look into other changes to the Regional Agreement, school choice and the possibility of moving 7 and 8 grade back to the Elementary School. Mr. Dermyer stated that he would volunteer to work with the Town Manager on a new survey. [#4]

Approve Beth Greenblatt Contract

Mr. Sieloff presented the Board with a proposed contract for their review and approval. Mr. Sieloff stated that the contract was prepared by Town Counsel. Mr. Ericson asked if Ms. Greenblatt has seen contract. Mr. Sieloff stated that she has not. Motion 15-202. Motion made by Robert Ericson to approve the Agreement for Solar Consulting Services between the Town of Lanesborough and Beacon Integrated Solutions, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 3-0. [#5]

Proposed additional custodian responsibilities

Mr. Sieloff carried this item over from the last Agenda to give the Board the opportunity to assess the need for professional cleaning services at the Town's Police Department. Mr. Sieloff told Mr. Goerlach that the Board of Health stated that the building needed to be professionally cleaned. Mr. Sieloff stated that the Town has spent money for improvements to the building but it should be kept up regularly as suggested by the Board of Health. Mr. Sieloff would like to have the Town's current custodian add this building to her duties and that there is money in the budget to do so. Mr. Goerlach asked why police officers at night could not perform the duties and asked why it had gotten so bad that the Board of Health had to get involved. Mr. Sieloff stated that it is not in their scope of work or the proper way to accomplish this. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Sieloff what the Town is currently doing with the Department of Public Works. Mr. Sieloff stated that the DPW Director said they have a system in place that works for them. Mr. Ericson stated that he believes this should be done by the officers. Mr. Goerlach asked for a motion. No motion made. Ms. Paula Byrde stated that she found that the Police Department has always been very responsive and believes that the police have no spare time to clean or should be asked to weekly clean the Department and disagrees with the Board's decision. Mr. Sayers stated that a police officer would have to be available to supervise the custodian and the Town would be paying two people. Mr. Ericson agreed. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Sieloff if the Chief could schedule an officer to do this a couple hours a week. Mr. Sieloff stated that he would talk to the Chief.

Street Light Request from local residents to add light to 22 Balance Rock Road

Mr. Sieloff stated that he visited the site and met with Mrs. Montini on this street light request and would like the Board to consider putting the light back in place. Mr. Ericson would like stop signs placed at the intersection of Bull Hill Road and Narragansett Avenue for safety issues. The Board discussed options for lighting and safety issues. The Board decided to hold this issue until the Energy Committee has completed its full assessment. [#6]

Lynne Court Drainage Issues

Mr. Sieloff presented the Board with a Memorandum from DPW Director Decelles dated December 14, 2015 with his recommendations. Lance Smagalski of 14 Lynne Court and Maura Boucher of 15 Lynne Court came before the Board. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Smagalski and Mrs. Boucher if anyone from the Highway Department had visited the property. Mr. Sieloff stated that he had walked the property with the DPW Director. Mr. Smagalski stated that he had a contractor come to the property to see what can be done to rectify the matter. Mr. Goerlach asked if the contractor could turn the water in another direction. Mrs. Boucher stated that there is damage to her property due to the excess water and black ice on the road which will be a safety issue for the school buses. Mr. Goerlach would like to set a meeting with Mr. Smagalski and the DPW Director. Mr. Smagalski stated that he is looking into ways to redirect the water flow. Mr. Goerlach stated that the only way the Town could do it is to pipe it and drain it to the brook which would be very costly and would like to find an alternative solution. Mr. Sieloff asked Mr. Smagalski to contact him after the holidays to discuss.

Heavy Vehicle Use/Temporary Access Permit - \$10,000 Surety Bond requirement for contractors working within the Town. Item placed on the next Agenda. [#7]

Discussion on property issues on roads off Narragansett Avenue. Item placed on the next Agenda.

Approval of Census Insert from Tree and Forest Committee

Mr. Sieloff presented the Board with a proposed newsletter from the Tree and Forest Committee which they would like to include with the Town Census mailing. Paula Byrdy was present on behalf of the Committee. Ms. Byrdy stated that the Committee raises money through fund raising and this insert is part of that process. Ms. Byrdy stated that the Committee is thankful for the extra money provided to it by the Board. She stated that 14 new trees were planted thanks to a donation from the 250th Committee. Ms. Byrdy told the Board that the Committee also uses the funds for the care and maintenance of King Elmer. Motion 15-203. Motion made by Robert Ericson to approve the Tree and Forest Committee Newsletter to be included with the Town Census mailing, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 3-0. Mr. Goerlach stated that Samantha Trybus is interested in planting a tree on the Police Department property which can be used as a Christmas tree and asked Ms. Byrdy if the Committee would have any interest in this. Ms. Byrdy stated that she would contact Ms. Trybus. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Sieloff to get Ms. Byrdy Ms. Trybus' contact information. [#8]

Mount Greylock School Building Project – Special Town Meeting Issue

Mr. Sieloff stated that this relates to the survey letter. Mr. Sieloff stated that he would like the Board to act quickly as it relates to the need for a Special Town Meeting. Mr. Sieloff stated that the purpose of the survey letter is to have an unbiased survey of the Town asking if residents want to spend money for a new school. Mr. Sieloff asked if this was what the Board wanted to accomplish through this survey. Mr. Goerlach asked for the Board's input. Mr. Sayers stated that the survey should go out as soon as possible. Mr. Goerlach asked the Board if they thought it should be a simple survey as Mr. Sieloff suggested. Mr. Sayers stated he agreed with a simple survey. Mr. Dermeyer stated that his suggestions would give a numerical and more effective score and more questions would give a better understanding of what residents want. Mr. Ericson liked Mr. Dermeyer's suggestion of more questions and a numerical score. Mr. Cohen stated that the State is making a decision in January based on numbers already submitted and the time has come and gone to make changes. Mr. Cohen stated that he thinks it is unrealistic to get an appropriate response with a survey as it needs to be more in depth. Mr. Goerlach stated that the Lanesborough Elementary School was originally presented at \$12 million and failed at Town vote and then was re-presented at \$9 million, so a lower cost can be accomplished. Mr. Goerlach, Mr. Dermeyer and Ms. Greene spoke about the Regional Agreement and how changes can be made. Ms. Greene stated that if the Town votes to disallow the debt exclusion then the project cannot move forward. Mr. Ericson stated that he is leaning towards a Town Meeting as a way to have open dialogue to explain and present this to Town residents. Mark Shiek stated that there have been plenty of open meetings and he is happy to have meeting with the Building Committee to answer the Board's questions. Mr. Goerlach stated that this would be a reason to get the survey out before the next meeting. Mr. Goerlach stated that the Board has been blocked every way to get a survey out to the residents. Mr. Cohen asked about the consultant the Board intends to use. Mr. Sieloff stated the Siena College has a group which works on independent surveys to accomplish this. Ms. Greene stated that they will do their best to get the information out to the public. Mr. Cohen does not believe that the consultant can make an unbiased survey. Mr. Dermeyer believed Mr. Cohen is incorrect in his assessment. [#9]

Proposed survey letter to Town residents

Mr. Sieloff gave a brief summary of what the Town is proposing with the survey and asked the Board what it is they wished to accomplish based on tonight's discussions. Mr. Sieloff stated that he will defer to the Board's wishes. Mr. Sayers and Mr. Goerlach stated that they would like the simple survey to be sent to the residents. Mr. Ericson would like a more complex survey or have a Special Town Meeting. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Sieloff when he could get a survey ready. Ms. Greene told the Board that line items cannot be moved within the budget. Ms. Greene stated that she knew the Board had concerns about taking excess money and spending it on other items. Mr. Shiek stated that this cannot be done. Motion 15-204. Motion made by Henry Sayers to send out a survey and let Mr. Sieloff send it to Siena College seconded by John Goerlach. Motion carried 2-0. Robert Ericson opposed. [#10]

Internet service providers and options - WiredWest update

Mr. Sieloff stated that he attended a WiredWest meeting this past weekend. Mr. Sieloff stated that the Town has a contract with Charter Communications at this time and there is a likelihood of Charter Communications taking over Time Warner in the first quarter of 2016. Mr. Sieloff stated that Time Warner is close to Pittsfield and there may be a possibility in late 2016 of installing infrastructure in Lanesborough. Mr. Ericson asked if this would include outlying areas. Mr. Sayers stated that in their meeting they stated it would be 100% coverage. Mr. Sieloff stated that the other alternative is WiredWest, but this would involve the Town borrowing approximately \$2.8 million. Mr. Sieloff stated that if the Town chose this route, WiredWest has stated that it would return the money borrowed to the Town in 5 to 10 years. Mr. Sieloff stated that Charter Communications may be a better solution as the Town would not have to borrow any money; but if the Town is interested in WiredWest a decision would need to be made by June 30th. Mr. Sieloff recommended that the Board wait until the first quarter to see how things progressed. The Board agreed with Mr. Sieloff's recommendation.

Other business which could not have been reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of the meeting. None.

Selectmen's Items

Mr. Goerlach would like to approach new businesses to come into Town. Mr. Goerlach would also like to renegotiate health insurance contributions for Town employees. Mr. Sieloff agreed with Mr. Goerlach that economic development should be a priority and stated that he has met the Chamber of Commerce and regularly meets with State Representatives and local business owners to discuss options. Mr. Sieloff stated that he suggested to the Berkshire Regional Planning that a staff person be hired to conduct research and have the towns share the cost of the salary to try to help with economic development. Mr. Sieloff stated that he has been talking with Representative Gailanne Cariddi about different percentages options for employees to contribute towards health insurance benefits. Mr. Sieloff stated that he is budgeting for a 10% increase in rates. Ms. Cariddi is looking into legislation to accomplish this. Mr. Goerlach stated that he thought that retirees could be set lower. Mr. Sieloff stated that he believes Adams just lowered their percentages due to the fact that they are no longer considered employees and asked the Board if they wished to do this. Mr. Goerlach stated that this should be further discussed with contract negotiations. Mr. Sieloff stated that he would follow up with this. Mr. Goerlach informed the Board that he installed a catch basin on Putnam Road for the Highway Department.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Sieloff informed Mr. Goerlach that the Sewer Commissioners were appointed in June which included Mr. Meirzejewski replacing Mr. Goerlach. Mr. Sieloff stated that he spoke with a representative from DCR regarding Rockwell Road and would like to speak with Mr. Sayers and DPW Director Decelles in more depth.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Henry Sayers to approve the Minutes of December 14, 2015, seconded by Robert Ericson. Motion carried 2-0. John Goerlach abstained from vote.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Robert Ericson, seconded by Henry Sayers. Motion carried 3-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Footnotes:

- [#1] Information from Superintendent Doug Diaz
- [#2] Berkshire Gas Road Opening Permit – 220 Narragansett Avenue
- [#3] 2016 License Approvals
- [#4] Donald Dermier – Mount Greylock Questions and Concerns
- [#5] Proposed Solar Consulting Services Agreement
- [#6] Street Light Request – 22 Balance Rock Road
- [#7] Proposed Heavy Vehicle Use/Temporary Access Permit
- [#8] Proposed Census Insert from Tree and Forrest Committee
- [#9] Mount Greylock School Building Project – Special Town Meeting Issue
- [#10] Proposed Survey Letter to Town Residents